

Surah 55
*Al-Rahman*¹

Makkan²



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND,
THE COMPASSIONATE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *The All-merciful.*

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾

[2] *Taught the Qur'ān.*

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾

[3] *Created Man.*

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾

[4] *Taught him speech.*³

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾

1. There are several ways in which this *Surah* is connected with the previous one. One, the previous *Surah* repeatedly warned in words, “So, how were My chastisement and My warnings?” So, as a complimentary, this *Surah* repeatedly asks, “So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?” Two, the previous *Surah* ended by mentioning, “a Sovereign, Omnipotent.” The question arose: who is this Sovereign, Omnipotent? The answer is in the first word of this present *Surah*: He is “the All-merciful.” That is, He is the One whose primary Quality is mercy: He who, out of His mercy, sent down the Qur’ān, the gateway to all kinds of blessings (Au. with points from Razi).

‘Ali is reported to have said that everything has its bride. The Qur’ān’s bride is *Surah al-Rahman* (Qurtubi).

The report has been treated as of Hasan status by the author of *Fayd al-Qadir* (Au.).

2. Some scholars have thought that this is a Makkan revelation, while others that it is Madinan. Yet others say it has both Makkan and Madinan revelations (Zamakhshari, Shawkani).

3. That is, gave man the power of speech (Razi and others). After having spent millions of dollars and dedicating decades of research, the scientists have finally concluded that

[5] The sun and the moon (are) on a determined course.⁴

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾

[6] The herbs⁵ and the trees prostrate themselves.⁶

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾

[7] And the heaven, He raised it up, and set the balance.⁷

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾

[8] In order that you may not transgress in the balance.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾

these dumb animals will not learn how to speak (Au.).

4. That is, they follow a well computed fixed course. Alusi, who died some 150 years ago, mentions at this point that the earlier belief of the scientists was that the sun is stationary. However, recently they have changed their opinion and begun to say that the sun is also on the move. This demonstrates that Alusi kept himself abreast of modern knowledge, because, although scientists knew of the sun's movement around the orbit since around a century ago, it was not in common knowledge until last few decades.

5. The translation follows the understanding of Mujahid, Qatadah (and many late commentators: Au.). "Najm" is used for a stem-less plant that cannot stand tall on its own, such as, for instance, vegetable plants. This was the opinion of Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id

b. Jubayr and Suddi. Ibn Jarir prefers this opinion. But a few others have understood it in the sense of "star" which is the more popularly known meaning. Commentators are equally divided between the two meanings.

6. That is, they are submitted to Allah's commands.

7. That is, He established justice (Mujahid: Ibn Jarir); without which the universe could not have existed in its present organized form (Alusi).

The second mention of "mizan" in the verse which follows, indicates that the "mizan" of this reference, in this context of cosmic objects, refers to the balance of things noticeable in nature.

It is widely believed that the universe originated with a big bang. Calculations show that had the explosive strength of the big bang been smaller by one in 1060 the Universe would

have collapsed upon itself due to gravitational pull. Had it been bigger by one in 1060 galaxies would not have formed.

There are four forces of nature: the gravitational, the strong (nuclear) force, the weak force and the electromagnetic force. Among these, the gravitational force is the weakest. It is a trillion times weaker than the strong force that keeps the protons in an atom's nucleus together. Yet, it is said that if the gravitational force was stronger by one in 1040 the universe would have collapsed upon itself during the first few microseconds of its formation and there would have been no stars or galaxies. On the other hand, if it was weaker by the same amount, matter would have been flung far and wide and no stars or galaxies would have come into existence. (This balance of forces is different from the balance between them as a combination of four forces, and the power of explosion of the big bang stated above).

On the other hand, if the nuclear force (strong force) was slightly weaker, the nucleus of an atom would disintegrate. So, we would have no atom. Deuterium has one proton stuck to one neutron. Now the sun and other stars use Deute-

rium as a necessary link in a chain of nuclear reaction to keep shining. In contrast, if the strong force was slightly stronger, there would be virtually no hydrogen left in the universe, because two protons would then stick to each other, overcoming the repelling force of the electrical charge, and annihilate one proton to reduce it to a neutron. Thus, only Helium would have existed and no Hydrogen, and, therefore, no water and no other elements.

The balance of forces has been critically managed. If gravity was slightly weaker, or electromagnetism slightly stronger, or the electron slightly less massive compared to the proton, all stars would be red dwarfs (temp. 6000 deg.), not allowing for life to develop. A correspondingly tiny change the other way, and the stars would be blue giants (of about 60,000 deg. temp): also not allowing life to develop. Similarly if the sun was 1.2 times larger, the light output would have not have allowed life to develop. Also, had it been 1.2 times larger, it would have burned up all its fuel and become a red giant in about 4 billion years. The sun is now 5 billion years old, which means there could have been no life without the above balance of forces. Again, if the sun was 20% smaller, it would not

[9] And establish the weights with justice and cut not the measure short.⁸ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

produce enough blue light for plants to make sugar and oxygen efficiently.

The temperature of the sun has also been critically maintained. Its surface temperature is 6000 deg. C. If it is reduced by 1%, life will freeze on earth. If it is increased by 1%, the earth will be too hot for life. In fact, the position of the sun in the Galaxy has itself been precisely determined. At its two-third distance from the galaxy center, it allows for life to exist: closer, and the radiation from the cosmic center would destroy life.

To add to the Design idea, the earth is now in a sphere around the sun called as the Ecosphere. Life can exist only in this sphere. If the earth was closer or at greater distance from the sun, life could not survive.

The entire planetary system around the sun is precariously balanced. Every planet has its function from the position at which it has been placed. Change the position, and you end up in chaos. A scientist, Jacques Lasker, applied a technique called Chaos Mathematics, in which each of the planetary gravitational effects in the solar system is written in an equation

called a differential equation to include many variables. 150,000 such algebraic terms fed to a computer say that they account for the stability and consistency of the orbits of the planets.

The earth's own size is critical. If it was more massive, its core would be too hot. The transfer of heat from the core to the crust would not allow plant life to flourish. Further, the atmospheric pressure would increase, and would not allow for the heart to pull up the blood from the legs, unless the size of the heart was doubled. On the other hand, if the size of the earth is reduced, the gravitational pull would be weaker and the earth would not be able to retain its atmosphere: it would fly off into space. Also, a thinner atmosphere would not be able to protect life on earth from the dangerous radiation of the sun. In fact, there is not a single phenomenon in nature, but whose existence depends precariously balanced on laws and forces of nature (Au.).

8. Although the word is "*mizan*," the meaning is "*mawzun*", that is, the thing that is weighed (Razi).

[10] *And the earth: He set it up for the creatures.*⁹

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾

[11] *Therein are fruits and date-palm bearing spathes.*

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾

[12] *And the grain along with husk, and fragrant (plants).*¹⁰

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾

[13] *So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?*¹¹

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٣﴾

[14] *He created man out of sounding clay like pottery.*¹²

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾

9. This is how Ibn `Abbas, Hasan, Mujahid and others understood the word “*anam*” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

10. Although “provision” is another meaning of the word “*rayhan*,” most have understood it to mean fragrance or fragrant plants (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi).

Thus, four kinds of means of sustenance have been mentioned: fruits that are eaten for pleasure, staple food for diet, a fruit (date) which is both fruit as well as a staple food, and, finally, fragrance, which is the need of every cultured man (Au.).

11. There is no disagreement among the commentators that by “you two” the allusion is to mankind and Jinn (Au.). The repetitive refrain “*So which of the favors of your Lord will*

you two deny” points to several favors. Of them some are material, others spiritual, a few apparent, others unapparent, some virtual, others real, a few others both virtual as well as real – in short, each repetition alludes to a new and different favor (Thanwi).

12. Summing up the various statements in the Qur`ān concerning man’s creation, it can be said that he was created – in stages - from,

تراب- طين الازب - حمأ مسنون - صلصلة كالفخار

“Dust, then a sticky clay, turned into a putrid sticking substance, and that to dried clay like pottery that makes sound when tapped” (Zamakhshari and Qurtubi, slightly modified).

[15] While He created the Jinn from smokeless flame of fire.¹³

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾

[16] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٦﴾

[17] Lord of the two easts and the two wests.¹⁴

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾

[18] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٨﴾

[19] He let loose the two waters: the two meet together.¹⁵

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾

[20] Between the two is a barrier that they transgress not.¹⁶

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾

[21] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢١﴾

13. Another meaning of “*marij*” that Ibn `Abbas and some others gave is, “the best of fires.” A third meaning is, “pure fire” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Lit., “*marij*” is for a mixture, and could as well be meaning “a mixture of flames” (Au.).

14. That is, the two easts and two wests of summer and winter (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

15. Ibn `Abbas, Sa`id b. Jubayr and others thought that the allusion by “*bahar*” is to waters, and by “two waters” it is to the waters in the heaven and waters in the earth, that meet together (once every year) - Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

16. That is, the two waters preserve their qualities, despite the fact that they meet. But there have been other interpretations. Qatadah and Ibn Zayd however said that the two: sweet and sour do not meet with each other (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). See *Surah Al-Furqan*, ayah 53 for further details.

This non-mixing however, is for a while, long or short. Ultimately of course, if the two waters are side by side, sweet water has to get submerged into the salty water of the sea (Razi).

Knowing, as we do, that the Jinn live on water as well, (where Shaytan spreads his throne), there is possibili-

[22] From the two come forth pearls and coral.¹⁷

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾

[23] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٣﴾

ty that the sweet water, (which maintains its characteristics far across into the sea to be visible for several miles), is useful for the Jinn (Au.).

17. “*Lu’lu*” is for big pearls while “*marjan*” is for the small ones. But Ibn Mas’ud said the latter stands for coral (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). Ibn ‘Abbas said that when it rains on the seas, the drop of rain water that falls into the mouth of a sea-shell becomes a pearl (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir). The opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas is in Ibn Abi Hatim and others (Shawkani), and of course there have been other opinions about the identity of “*marjan*.”

Of knowledge that the pearls come from the sea and not rivers, Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir explain that although the pronoun “*minhuma*” covers both sea as well as fresh water, the allusion is only to one, just as in verse (71: 15-16) which says,

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا وَجَعَلَ
الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا

“Have they not observed how Allah has created the seven heavens in lay-

ers and placed among them the moon as a light.” Here too, Allah used the plural pronoun, lending the meaning that Allah placed a moon in each of the seven firmaments, while, as we know, the moon is found in our firmament alone. There are other examples of such usage. Even the usually well-informed Razi and Alusi offer the same explanation, while the latter uses a whole page to discuss why Allah used a noun in dual to include both sea as well as freshwater as sources of pearls and coals while they are extracted from seas alone. Mawdudi adds the possibility that since the sea water contains both alkaline as well as fresh water, the usage is literally correct.

But the Qur’ān comes on top. Perhaps, until recent times pearls were obtained from seas alone. However, latest information tells us that pearls are found in fresh water also. *The Grzimek’s Animal Encyclopedia* has the following to state (under Unionideas): “Freshwater mussels in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere have produced pearls

[24] And His are the ships sailing elevated in the sea, like the landmarks.¹⁸

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ

﴿٢٤﴾

[25] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٥﴾

[26] Everyone on it will perish.¹⁹

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

[27] But there will remain the Face of your Lord,²⁰ possessed of Majesty and Bounty.²¹

وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

﴿٢٧﴾

of great value, as for example those from the Mississippi River.” And, “Members of the marine Pteriidae and freshwater Unionoidea have been sources of natural pearls and mother-of-pearl shell for centuries.” The Encyclopedia Britannica states the following under “pearls”: “Pearls are characterized by their translucence and luster and by a delicate play of surface colour called orient. The more perfect its shape (spherical or drop like) and the deeper its luster, the greater its value. Only those pearls produced by mollusks whose shells are lined with mother-of-pearl (e.g., certain species of both saltwater oysters and freshwater clams) are really fine pearls; pearls from other mollusks are reddish or whitish, porcellaneous, or lacking in pearly luster. Jewelers commonly refer to saltwater pearls as Oriental pearls and to those produced by freshwater mollusks as freshwater pearls” (Au.).

As always, the *Shi`ah* have a queer explanation. According to one of their reports, `Ali and Fatimah are two waters (bahran) from whom issued Hasan and Hussain who are pearl and coral (*lu`lu* and *marjan*). After noting above, Alusi adds that although to him Hasan and Hussain are dearer than *Lu`lu`* and *marjaan*, the interpretation is a piece of nonsense.

18. It is said that once `Ali was by the shore of River Furat when a ship passed by. He remarked, “By Him who makes this ship plough through the water, neither did I kill `Uthman nor did the thought ever occur to me (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

19. “On it,” i.e., on the earth.

20. There is isn't any difference in opinion that by “the Face” the allusion is to the Person of Allah, Most High.

[28] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٨﴾

[29] All who are in the heavens or the earth implore Him.²² Every day He is in an endeavor.²³

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

[30] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٠﴾

21. "Ikram: two ideas are prominent in the word, (1) the idea of generosity, as proceeding from the person whose attribute it is, and (2) the idea of honour, as given by others to the person whose attribute it is. Both these ideas are summed up in 'nobility'. To make the meaning quite clear, I have employed in the translation the two words 'Bounty and Honour' for the single word ikram. The same attributes recur in the last verse of this *Surah*. In the Fact of Allah's Eternity is the Hope of our Future" (Yusuf Ali).

The Prophet has told us to appeal in supplications by these Attributes of Allah (Kashshaf, Qurtubi):

أَلْطُؤُوا بَيْنَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

The report has been preserved by many, including Ahmad and Hakim, the latter treating it as trustworthy following the conditions laid down by Bukhari and Muslim. However, Tirmidhi declared it weak (Au.).

22. Qatadah said: None can regard himself as free of Him and His bestowal, whether in the heavens or on the earth. Everyone depends on Him and seeks His help and support, the source of all good (Ibn Jarir). Hence the reported supplicatory words (*du'a ma'thura*):

يا حي، يا قيوم، يا بديع السموات والأرض، يا ذا الجلال والإكرام، لا إله إلا أنت، برحمتك نستغيث، أصلح لنا شأننا كله، ولا تكلنا إلى أنفسنا طرفة عين، ولا إلى أحد من خلقك

"O the Living, the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist, O the Originator of the heavens and the earth, O the Majestic, the Splendid, there is no deity save You, by Your mercy do we seek Your aid: set right our affairs; do not leave (our affair) to depend on ourselves for a moment, nor upon anyone of Your creation" (Ibn Kathir).

For example, if Allah had so designed the human tongue that it moved only

on specific commands, they would eat off their tongues, placing it between the teeth at the wrong moment. If the tongue moves around a hundred times during a minute, shifting material to be chewed, but never getting hurt it is because Allah has not left us dependent upon ourselves in this regard (Au.).

23. It is said (Muqatil: Alusi) that this was revealed in response to Jewish claims that Allah takes rest on Saturdays (Kashshaf).

Mujahid and 'Abd b. 'Umayr remarked: Every day He is in a new affair: feeding the creations, removing their affliction, curing the sick and answering to the call of the callers. Qatadah added: Adding new creations, dealing death to others, and giving shape to new creations.

A *hadīth* is also quoted in this regard:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى (كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ). قَالَ « مِنْ شَأْنِهِ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ ذَنْبًا وَيُفَرِّجَ كَرْبًا وَيَرْفَعَ قَوْمًا وَيَخْفِضَ آخَرِينَ ».

Abu Darda' reports that when the Prophet was asked about the meaning of this verse he said, "It is part of His affairs that He forgives the sin, removes the affliction, allows ascendancy to a people, and brings down others"

(Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

However, Bukhari treated the above words as those of Abu Darda' (Ibn Kathir). But a shorter version has been treated as *Sahih* by Albani (S.Ibrahim).

Majid looks at a wider aspect: "God is thus not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sustainer every moment of its existence. The entire cosmic order is ever dependent on His will, incapable of sustaining and developing itself and performing its works, without His aid, in virtue of its own inherent energies, and creation is not an act of the past combining automatically: His creative activity is incessant. This refutes the Hindu doctrine that Brahma, having performed his legitimate past in the mundane evolution by his original creation of the universe has retired into the background.' (EBr. xi. P. 577) This also repudiates the mechanistic concept of deism, which limits the divine activity to creation of the world and denies to Him any direct contact with His creation and also the Greek idea which states that God is static, and aloof from the world. A Christian scholar sums up the position of the orthodox Muslim theologian thus: - 'He regards the world

and all the events in the world as a perpetual miracle – a miracle always and consistently going on. It is not only that, by a creative miracle, the world was brought into existence... but all through the existence of the world – from moment to moment – there is this miraculous creation going on... When fire burns or when a knife cuts, that is not by any nature in the fire, or a quality of the knife. The cutting and the being cut, the burning and the being burned, are all by Allah. The burning and its direct effects are the direct creations of Allah.’ (Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 137-139).”

Zamakhshari’s following note should set a few minds at rest. `Abdullah b. Tahir sent for Husayn b. al-Fadl and said to him: Three verses worry me and I have called you to help me out. (i) Allah’s words:

فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ [المائدة/٣١]

“Then he became of those remorseful.” (This is about Habil who murdered Qabil: Au.).

Now, said `Abdullah b. Tahir, remorse is nothing but repentance, so why was he punished?

Then again, (ii) His words,

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى [النجم/٣٩]

“There is nothing for man but that for which he strives.”

But, said `Abdullah b. Tahir, if there is nothing for man in the Hereafter, beyond what he earned, then, what is the meaning of Allah’s words which promise several-fold rewards?

Again, (iii) His words,

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ [الرحمن/٢٩]

“Everyday He is in an endeavor.”

Now, asked `Abdullah b. Tahir, is it not true that all that has to be until the Day of Judgment has been penned down. So, how do we understand Allah being in any fresh endeavor?

Husayn al-Fadl answered him: As for the verse,

فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ [المائدة/٣١]

- the remorse was not over the death of his brother, but over the fact that he had attacked him at all.

(Imām Razi points out that his remorse was on account of the fact that after he had left his brother’s corpse in the open, he witnessed the fight of the two ravens, one killing another, and burying it. He felt remorseful that he hadn’t been as considerate with his brother’s corpse as the raven had been for the dead raven).

[31] Soon We shall be free for you,²⁴ O the two heavy ones.²⁵

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَا الثَّقَلَانِ ﴿٣١﴾

[32] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٢﴾

Another explanation is that “*nadamah*” had different requirements and connotations in different nations of the past. This was not the “*nadamah*” of repentance which could wipe out sins. In some ways Allah has treated this *Ummah* as a special people: a status others do not share with it. As regards the words,

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى [النجم/٣٩]

- the reward of “one for one” is following Allah’s “*‘adl*” (justice), while a thousand times more reward is following His “*fadl*” (grace). Finally, with regard to the words,

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ [الرحمن/٢٩]

- the allusion is not to beginning of the affairs or endeavors, but to bringing them to light, in Arabic:

فإنها شؤون يديها لا شؤون يتدنها

24. The allusion is to mankind and Jinn (Ibn Jarir, Kashshaf and others). The word has been used for men and Jinn in *ahadith* also (Ibn Kathir). Ja’far al-Sadiq is reported to have said that they have been so called because they are heavily load-

ed with sins. Further, this *Surah* and *Surah al-Ahqaf*, supported by a few other Qur’ānic verses, prove that the Jinn have also been addressed by the Prophet. They are just like the humans in this regard (Qurtubi).

They could have been so called because (i) both men and Jinn can attempt and achieve what no other creation can, and (ii) both have been given freedom of choice and are, therefore, difficult to move out of their opinions, especially in matters related to their Lord, where their adamancy runs to a supreme degree (Au.).

To help understand the meaning of the word “*thaqal*”, Mufti Shafi’ writes: A *hadith* says,

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْآخِرِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ حَبْلٌ مَمْدُودٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَعِثْرَتِي أَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرَقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَى الْحَوْضِ

“I am leaving behind me two weighty things, one of which is heavier than the other: (i) Allah’s Book which is the rope extended from the heaven to the earth, and (ii) my kinsfolk. And the two will

[33] O the company of Jinn and men! If you can pass through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then pass through. You will not pass through except with an authority.²⁶

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ
تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

[34] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٤﴾

never part until they come to the Pond.”

Sho'ayb al-Arna'ut remarked that although the narrative is weak (so said Tirmidhi himself), but it draws strength from other reports of similar meaning. However, the part which says, “And the two will never part until they come to the Pond,” is definitely weak (Au.).

There are other *ahadith* that speak of the importance of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* that the Prophet left behind, although he did not employ the word “*thaqal*” in them. At all events, “*thaqal*” is used for anything heavy, important, or prominent (Au.).

25. Ibn 'Abbas said that this is only a manner of threat, otherwise, Allah is never occupied (in such a way as not to be free for another affair) – Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir.

Bukhari said that being engaged in an affair does not prevent Him from taking up another (Ibn Kathir).

26. Dahhak's opinion was that the allusion is to the Day of Judgment when the criminals would like to flee but will find seven rows of angels on the horizons stationed as barriers. But Ibn 'Abbas preferred the simpler meaning that men and Jinn can never escape out of Allah's domain, hold, and power (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); which includes heavens and the earth, as well as His decrees: Zamakhshari); and His punishment (Razi).

Mufti Shafi' points out that the verse cannot be related to space travel either in negative or in positive.

A major problem in space is the distance. Traveling at the speed at which they do in space, about 10 km per second, humans will need 135,000 years to reach the next star; which, by cosmic standards, is as close to the sun as two bacterium within a dot. To cross their own Milky Way Galaxy, humans will need 3,000,000,000 (3 billion) years. And how many

[35] Against you will be let loose a flame of Fire²⁷ and (molten) copper;²⁸ and then you will not be able to defend yourselves.²⁹

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوْاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ ﴿٣٥﴾

[36] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٦﴾

galaxies are there? Billions. What is the space between galaxies? It is, in terms of travel distance, billions of years. And, finally, there are areas that humans can never reach, even if they travel at the speed of light, because those areas are receding at the same rate at which light travels. Thus, humans can never pass through the confines of the heavens. Far from that, they will never know where those confines are. Now, that was about the borders of the heavens. The situation with the confines of the earth is not any brighter since its confines are ultimately the confines of the Solar system – its own confines being inseparable. To cross the Solar system's gravitational pull will need several decades of travel, for which, (apart from length of human life, repair and maintenance of the craft, food supply, etc.), carrying the fuel is an insurmountable problem (unless a huge nuclear re-

actor is lifted into space: an impossibility by any measure). But, more importantly, the address is to the entire humanity, not to a few individuals, ready for suicide, sent into deep space. Humanity in general, is shackled to this earth (Au.).

27. Most of the scholars have said that “*shuwaz*” is used for that blue flame that breaks out of a fire while a few others have thought that it is used for smoke (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

28. Regarding “*nuhas*” the opinion is split. The Arabs use it for “smoke that is not accompanied by flame” as well as for “molten copper” (Ibn Jarir, Zamakhshari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

29. (Alternatively, or perhaps additionally), the two: men and Jinn will not be able to help each other (Qurtubi).

[37] Then, when the heaven splits open, and it will be crimson (in color)³⁰ - like oil.³¹

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً
كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾

[38] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٨﴾

[39] Then, that day none will be questioned concerning his sins, neither men nor Jinn.³²

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ
﴿٣٩﴾

[40] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٠﴾

[41] The criminals will be known by their marks³³ and so shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet.³⁴

يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ
بِالنَّوَصِي وَالْأَفْئَامِ ﴿٤١﴾

30. Actually, the heavens will undergo several changes in appearance: appearing red, blue, yellow and so on in different phases of destruction (Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet has also informed us, as in a report preserved by Ahmad,

يُبْعَثُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاءُ تَطِشُ عَلَيْهِمْ (رواه أحمد وأبو يعلى وفيه عبد الرحمن بن أبي الصهباء ذكره ابن أبي حاتم ولم يذكر فيه جرحاً وبقية رجاله ثقات - الهيثمي في الزوائد)

“People will be raised on the Day of Standing while the heaven sends down a drizzle (for a little while)” – Ibn Kathir.

Haythami treated the report as somewhat trustworthy (Au.).

31. There are two opinions about “*dihan*.” (i) “Shining bright” and (ii), “leather” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

32. That is, they will not be questioned about their sins: did you do this? Or, did you do that? But rather, they would be questioned as to why did they ever do it (Shawkani quoting Ibn Abi Hatim).

33. The angels (as well as others) will know the unbelievers from their eyes turned blue (out of fear) and faces turned dark (Ibn Jarir from the earliest commentators).

34. Suddi said that the criminals will have their heads bound together close to their feet (Kashshaf, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir).

[42] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

[43] This is the Jahannum that the criminals laid the lie against.

[44] They shall go round between it and between scalding water (heated to the) utmost degree.

[45] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?³⁵

[46] And for him who feared³⁶ standing before his Lord, are two gardens.³⁷

[47] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

[48] Abounding in branches.

[49] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

[50] In both running springs.

[51] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٢﴾

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آِنٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٥﴾

وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٧﴾

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٩﴾

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ ﴿٥٠﴾

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥١﴾

35. But what's the favor in being bound, cast into Hell, and treated with boiling water? The answer is, it consists in mankind and Jinn being warned beforehand. The favor also consists in the virtuous ones informed that the criminals will be locked up away from them, and punished for the wrong they freely and sadistically committed upon them during the earthly life (Au.).

36. The word used here is "*khawf*" which is for fear arising from one's feeling of powerlessness against another, while "*hashyah*" is for fear arising out of the greatness of him that one fears or is overawed by. Both "*khawf*" as well as "*hashyah*" have been fittingly used in reference to man's fear of Allah (Razi).

Raghib has said: When *khawf* is used in reference to Allah, it does not refer to the kind of fear that one feels

against, say, a lion, but rather, it amounts to abstaining from sinful deeds and inclination towards good deeds. Hence it is said:

لا يعد خائفاً من لم يكن للذنوب تاركاً

One is not counted as fearful, if he does not give up sins (Alusi).

37. Note that in the previous verse two kinds of torture were mentioned for the sinners. Here they are contrasted with two gardens for the faithful (Razi).

A report has been preserved which says,

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَهُوَ يُقْصُّ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ (وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- الثَّانِيَةَ (وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ الثَّانِيَةَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- الثَّالِثَةَ (وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ) فَقُلْتُ الثَّالِثَةَ وَإِنْ زَنَى وَإِنْ سَرَقَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ «نَعَمْ وَإِنْ رَغِمَ أَنْفُ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ». - ورجال أحمد الصحيح: مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد

Abu Darda' reports that he heard the Prophet speak from the pulpit quoting this verse, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two gardens.*' I asked, 'Messenger of Allah, even if he fornicated and stole?' He answered, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two*

gardens.' I repeated a second time, 'Even if he fornicated and stole?' He said a third time, '*And for him who feared standing before his Lord, are two gardens.*' I repeated a third time, 'Even if he fornicated and stole, O Messenger of Allah?' He answered, 'Yes, even if Abu Darda dislikes it.'

Nevertheless, it is also reported as a statement of Abu Dardaa' who added his personal note that, "If someone feared he will certainly not fornicate or steal" (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

The report is in Ahmad treated trustworthy by Haythami (Au.).

On another occasion when this statement "even if he fornicated and stole" was made before Zuhri, he remarked, "This was in the early stages before the obligations (*fara'id*) were revealed. After they were revealed, the statement has become defunct." (Shawkani).

But the main part is also in *Sahihayn*, Ahmad, and others, coming through Abu Dharr, but without reference to the "two gardens." Abu Hurayrah also reported something similar; and the majority is of the opinion that a believer could be ushered into Paradise despite his sins – by Allah's special grace; but the general rule is that he is likely to face punishment for

[52] In both every kind of fruit - two kinds.³⁸

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ ﴿٥٢﴾

[53] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٣﴾

[54] Reclining on carpets whose inner-lining is brocade;³⁹ and fruits of the two gardens in close reach.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ
وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

[55] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٥﴾

[56] Therein (maidens) gazing low.⁴⁰ Untouched before them by any human or Jinn.⁴¹

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ
قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾

[57] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٧﴾

his sins before entry, especially, sins against his own kind (Au.).

38. "Two kinds:" i.e., different in shape, color, smell and taste.

39. If the inner lining is brocade, what do you think of the beauty of the outer material? (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

40. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zayd explained "*qaasirat ut-tarfi*" as meaning those who will not look up to anyone but their spouses (Ibn Jarir – and most commentators); i.e., they are chaste, virtuous ones (Razi).

41. Majid comments and quotes: "Christian writers look askance, and almost in horror, at passages like this. And quite naturally. For in the system of Christian morals sex life is

conceived as something inherently evil, at best only to be tolerated. This morbid attitude to life 'has appeared only with the advent of the black Christian era.' Islam has reversed this diseased outlook. It holds, freely and frankly, with the modern scientific knowledge that sexual life is 'the source of the highest joy for which there is no substitute. It is the supreme and incomparable physiological happiness, which should be nursed and treasured, and not persecuted.'...Sex life is not at all a tolerated evil, difficult to escape, but... a great blessing, without which life is colorless. The sexual element in human existence must be valued and treasured.' (Nemilov, *opp. cit.* pp. 200-201)."

[58] As if they are rubies and coral.⁴²

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾

[59] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٩﴾

[60] Is the recompense for goodness anything but goodness?⁴³

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾

This *ayah* has been used as evidence that the Jinn will enter the same Paradise as humans (Ibn Jarir).

42. The Prophet is reported by Ibn Mas'ud as having said,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- قَالَ « إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ مِنْ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ لَيُرَى بَيَاضُ ساقِهَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ سَبْعِينَ حُلَّةً حَتَّى يُرَى مُخْهُهَا وَذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ (كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ) فَأَمَّا الْيَاقُوتُ فَإِنَّهُ حَجَرٌ لَوْ أَدْخَلْتَ فِيهِ سِلْكَاً ثُمَّ اسْتَصَفَيْتَهُ لَأُرِيْتَهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ ». »

“The whiteness of the shank of women of the dwellers of Paradise will be visible from behind seventy shrouds. Even the bone-marrow will be visible. This is following Allah’s words, ‘As if they are rubies and corals.’ As for rubies, they are precious stones. If you inserted a thread through it, and then cleansed it, you will see it from the other side,” (Ibn Jarir, Qurtubi); i.e. it is transparent.

However, Tirmidhi reports it as a statement of Ibn Mas'ud (Ibn Kathir).

The Prophet is also reported to have said, as in Muslim and other works that,

« إِنَّ أَوَّلَ زُمْرَةٍ تَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَى صُورَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيَلَّةُ الْبَدْرِ وَالَّتِي تَلِيهَا عَلَى أَضْوَاءِ كَوْكَبٍ دُرِّيٍّ فِي السَّمَاءِ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ زَوْجَتَانِ اثْنَتَانِ يُرَى مُخٌ سَوْفَهُمَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ اللَّحْمِ وَمَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَعَزُّبُ ». »

“The first group to enter Paradise will have faces like the full moon. Those who follow them will shine like the brightest star in the heaven. Each of them will have two spouses. The bone-marrow of their legs will be visible from beyond the flesh. And, there will be no bachelors in Paradise” (Ibn Kathir).

43. Imām Razi points out that this *ayah*, along with two others, is so rich of meaning that it can be explained in a hundred ways. The other two verses of the same nature are:

فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ [البقرة/١٥٢]

and,

وَإِنْ عُدَّتُمْ عِدْنَا [الإسراء/٨]

[61] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦١﴾

[62] And, besides the two,⁴⁴ there are two more gardens.⁴⁵

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ ﴿٦٢﴾

To further explain the *ayah*, we take the following from Bayhaqi's *Shu'ab al-Iman* for its brevity. Abu Sa'd al-Khazzaz is reported to have said in explanation of this verse:

عن أبي سعيد الخزاز: (هل جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان) « هل جزاء من انقطع عن نفسه إلا التعلق بربه ؟ وهل جزاء من انقطع عن أنس المخلوقين إلا الأنس برب العالمين ؟ وهل جزاء من صبر علينا إلا الوصول إلينا ؟ .. وهل جزاء التعب في الدنيا والنصب فيها إلا الراحة في الآخرة ؟ وهل جزاء من صبر على البلوى إلا التقرب إلى المولى ؟ وهل جزاء من سلم قلبه إلينا أن نجعل توليته إلى غيرنا ؟ وهل جزاء من بعد عن الخلق إلا التقرب إلى الحق ؟ « - شعب الإيمان للبيهقي - (ج ١ / ص ٤٩٣)

“Is the reward for him who severed himself from his own self, but a connection with his Lord? Is the reward of him who cut himself from the created beings, anything but affinity with his Lord? Is the reward of him who bore patience for Our sake, but that he should reach Us?.. Is the reward of hardships in the world and difficulties in it except rest and comfort in the Hereafter? Is the reward for him who bore

in patience the tribulations, but closeness with his Lord? Is the reward of him who submitted his heart that he should be handed over to other than Us? And, is the reward of distancing oneself from the creations but proximity with the Truth?” (Au.)

44. “Besides the two,” i.e., more illustrious than the two (Zamakhshari, Razi).

45. (Bukhari, Muslim and others have preserved) a tradition in this context:

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ « جَنَّتَانِ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ ، أُنِيتُهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا وَجَنَّتَانِ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أُنِيتُهُمَا وَمَا فِيهِمَا ، وَمَا بَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا رِذَاءُ الْكِبَرِ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَدْنٍ »

The Prophet said, “Two gardens made of silver, along with the utensils and all that there is; and two gardens of gold with their utensils and all that there is. And, there will not be anything between their Lord and them seeing Him except His shroud of

[63] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٦٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[64] Dense green.

﴿٦٤﴾ مُدْهَامَتَانِ

[65] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٦٥﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[66] In them two fountains gushing forth.

﴿٦٦﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّخَتَانِ

[67] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٦٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[68] In the two are fruits, date-palm trees, and pomegranates.⁴⁶

﴿٦٨﴾ فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ

[69] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٦٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[70] In them are the good and comely ones.

﴿٧٠﴾ فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ

[71] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٧١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[72] Fair ones,⁴⁷ restrained⁴⁸ in pavilions.⁴⁹

﴿٧٢﴾ حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ

Greatness on His Face, in the everlasting Paradise” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

Ibn Hajr has traced another version in which the words are as follows:

جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ
وَرَقٍ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ” (أَخْرَجَهُ الطَّبْرِيُّ وَابْنُ أَبِي
حَاتِمٍ وَرِجَالُهُ ثِقَاتٌ)

“Those will be two gardens of gold for those ‘brought nigh,’ and two gardens of silver for those of the ‘right hand side’” (Au.).

46. Aren’t dates and pomegranates included in fruits that they should be

mentioned separately? Alusi answers that the two are different from the rest. Although date is a fruit, it is also used as a staple diet. On the other hand, pomegranates are fruits as well as useful for their medicinal value. Alusi adds later that one of them is warm for the body (dates) while the other is cold; one of them is always sweet while the other sweet-sour, one’s tree is tall but less branched while the other short, well spread.

47. (In his “*Al-Nihayah fi Gharib...*” Ibn al-Athir has defined “*howra*” (pl.: “*hur*”) as a maiden with ex-

[73] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٧٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

[74] Untouched⁵⁰ before them⁵¹ by any human or Jinn.⁵²

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾

[75] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

﴿٧٥﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

tremely white eye-ball, and an extremely dark iris (Alusi).

visit them in rounds” (Shawkani, Alusi).

48. That is, they are concealed behind curtains. In other words, those who remain within their bridal canopies, do not look at anyone other than their spouses, and have no wish to be loitering around in the streets (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf*).

50. The original word “*tamatha*” is used for deflowering a virgin. A second meaning is that it is those who have never experienced menstruation (Qurtubi). And, the *ayah* leads us to believe that sexual intercourse is part of the life of the Jinn (Zamakhshari, Razi, Qurtubi). Some scholars contend that the verse opens the possibility of Jinn’s intercourse with humans in this life (Qurtubi).

49. Those will be huge pearls chipped hollow (Ibn Jarir from the *Salaf* such as `Umar ibn al-Khattab, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid and others).

It is reported that some people wrote to Imām Malik that there was a Jinn who wished to marry a Muslim woman. He answered that he did not see anything wrong in it except that he would not like to encourage such an arrangement for the reason that if a woman is found pregnant and asked who the father was, she would reply, “A Jinn.”

There is a *hadith* to this effect. It is in the *Sahihayn* and other collections. It says,

« إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَيْمَةً مِنْ لَوْلُؤَةٍ مُجَوَّفَةٍ ، عَرْضُهَا سِتُونَ مِيلًا ، فِي كُلِّ زَاوِيَةٍ مِنْهَا أَهْلٌ ، مَا يَرَوْنَ الْآخَرِينَ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ »

“There is a tent in Paradise of width 60 miles, made of hollow pearl. In its every corner are (a believer’s) family-folk – none able to see others. The believer will

That apart, the majority of scholars – such as Abu Yusuf, Muhammad, Ibn Abi Layla, Awzaa`ee, have said that

they are also liable to rewards and punishments and will enter Paradise or Hellfire (Alusi).

51. "Before them," i.e., before the dwellers of Paradise (Zamakhshari).

52. The Prophet has said about the women in Paradise:

"إن أزواج الجنة ليغنين أزواجهن بأحسن أصوات سمعها أحد قط، إن مما يغنين: نحن الخيرات الحسان، أزواج قوم كرام. ينظرون بقرة أعيان. وإن مما يغنين به: نحن الخالدات فلا تمتنه، نحن الآمنات فلا يخفنه، نحن المقيمات فلا يظعنه."

رواه الطبراني في الصغير والأوسط ورجاله رجال الصحيح. (مجمع الزوائد ومنبع الفوائد)

"Women in Paradise sing with the best of voices ever heard by anyone. Of what they sing: 'We are the most splendid beautiful ones, spouses of the honored ones.' They look around with cooling sights. And of the things they sing, 'We are everlasting' – so they will not die. 'We are the peaceful ones' – so they will not disappoint him. 'We are stayers' – so they will not go away."

Haythami declared the above trustworthy (Au.).

Alusi quotes a shorter form of the following *hadith* as found in Ahmad, Hakim and *Sahih* of Ibn Hibban (in varying words) through Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri. The Prophet said,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ « إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكِي فِي الْجَنَّةِ سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً قَبْلَ أَنْ يَحْوَلَ ثُمَّ تَأْتِيهِ امْرَأَتُهُ فَتَضْرِبُ عَلَى مَنْكِبَيْهِ فَيَنْظُرُ وَجْهَهُ فِي خَدِّهَا أَصْفَى مِنَ الْمِرْآةِ وَإِنَّ أَدْنَى لَوْلُؤَةٍ عَلَيْهَا تُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ فَتُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَيَرُدُّ السَّلَامَ وَيَسْأَلُهَا مَنْ أَنْتِ وَتَقُولُ أَنَا مِنَ الْمَرِيدِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَيَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا سَبْعُونَ ثَوْبًا أَذْنَاهَا مِثْلُ الثُّعْمَانِ مِنْ طَوْنِي فَيَنْقُدُهَا بِصَرِّهِ حَتَّى يَرَى مَخَّ سَاقِهَا مِنْ وَرَاءِ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ التَّيْجَانِ إِنْ أَدْنَى لَوْلُؤَةٍ عَلَيْهَا لَتُضِيءُ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ »

"A man will remain resting in one position for seventy years in Paradise before making another move. Then his spouse will come and touch him on the shoulder. He will look into her cheek, clearer than a mirror; and the simplest of pearl on her will make the east and west shine. She will greet him. He will return her greeting and ask her, 'Who could you be?' She will say, 'I am the "more [ma-zid]" (that had been promised).' She will have seventy clothes on her. The simplest of them will be like a very special cloth. Then the man will cast a glance at her and see the bone-marrow of her leg through them. She will have a crown on her head of which the simplest of pearl will make the east and the west shine."

[76] Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful carpets.⁵³

مُتَكِّينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حَسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

[77] So which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny?

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٧﴾

[78] Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the possessed of Majesty and Bounty.⁵⁴

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

Majid quotes Gibbon: "This description of physical pleasures in Paradise," says Gibbon, "has provoked the indignation, perhaps the envy, of the monks: they declaim against the impure religion of Mahomet; and his modest apologists are driven to the poor excuses of figures and allegories. But the sounder and the more consistent party adhere, without shame, to the literal interpretation of the Koran; useless would be the resurrection of the body, unless it were restored to the possession and exercises of its worthiest faculties; and the union of sensual and intellectual enjoyment is requisite to complete the happiness of the double animal, the perfect man." (GRE, V. p. 351).

53. The word "*abqariyy*" is made up of two words: "*abqar*" (meaning: a place where the Jinn were supposed to live) and "*qaryah*" (meaning: village or town). Combining the two, it became synonymous with every person who is highly powerful, tal-

ented, and able, evoking wonder; or a thing of remarkably high qualities (Kashshaf, Razi, Qurtubi, Shawkani, in different words).

However, there are several other explanations for the word "*abqariyy*" – as, naturally, of most of the adjectives used in connection with Paradise or the Fire, in this *Surah* (Au.).

54. Ibn Kathir notes: All the six *hadith* works except Bukhari have a *hadith* to this effect:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- إِذَا سَلَّمَ لَمْ يَقْعُدْ إِلَّا مِقْدَارَ مَا يَقُولُ

On the authority of `A'isha, "After the Prophet had finished his Prayers, he would hardly tarry except for the time required to say:

« اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ». وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ ابْنِ مُبَرِّزٍ « يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ».

That is, these were the words the Prophet invariably said after every Prayer, before rising. مَقَّتْ